

Revelation 15: Song by the Glassy Sea

Wonderful to be with you all this Lord's day. Blessed to be able to share Revelation 15 with you.

Revelation gives us an unique inside look at the future judgment of God against all evil and unrighteousness, we as readers of His Word get to see just how God will finally bring about a finality to evil.

And its been interesting to see that throughout Revelation, we have seen God's judgment being intermixed with qualities of His nature.

I remind you when we looked at chapter 4 and 5 that Revelation is not earth centered in narrative, its not really even saint centered, concerning our final salvation from evil and death, but it is God-centered in that the final result is God brings His royal authority upon all creation, and never will there be anything to rebel against Him again.

So we are going to see in chapter 15 how God's nature intermixes with His judgment in three ways.

1. His judgment intermixed with mercy
2. His judgment intermixed with justice
3. His judgment intermixed with authority

And as Bible readers you might have a spark in your mind to a special verse that the Lord demands of us with similar wording:

Micah 6:8 (ESV): He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

God is never not good. Double negative but I say it with emphasis, even in the horror of His unfolding judgment, He never stops from being all Holy, all Good, and all Compassionate. God tells us what is good, by telling us of Himself.

Revelation 15:1 (ESV): Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.

The beginning of chapter fifteen John takes us back into the sanctuary, the throne room, of God, where we were in chapter 4 and 5: and a prelude once again for God's judgment, and John witnesses another sign in heaven:

This sign is great and amazing! These words great and amazing are only ever ascribed in the Bible to come from God, they are reserved for His actions.

In CA we over-exaggerate our adjectives. These are reserved for the Lord, so this sign that John witnesses falls at the consequence of God's action, and this is what John witnesses: 7 angels with 7 plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.

And here is where we get to point number 1: **His judgment intermixed with mercy.**

But where is it? This is an important understanding of the nature of God. God has only one characteristic of His nature that has an expiration date: HIS WRATH.

His wrath has an expiration date, but His love, His faithfulness does not!
Psalm 100:5 (ESV): For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

And for you believer especially today through the work of Jesus Christ, the wrath of God is finished for you! You can look at this verse in Ch.15 and say, I have it all ready! For the wrath of God was poured out upon His most valuable possession: His son, Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:6-11 (ESV): For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— 8 but God shows his love for us in that while

we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

This is important for your Gospel story, because when we make the statement, I am saved! Well what are you saved from? Are you saved from bumper living? Are you saved from bad habits? Or are you saved from the wrath of God which was poured out upon the Son of God on your behalf?

Wrath of God is an important part of our story, and its something we shouldn't falter from.

Illustration: In Christ Alone, wedding in Bristol, Line in the hymn: "Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied, wanted to change it to "love of God is magnified." Thats ok, but not the fullest extent to what Christ endured for you and I.

Every single time in the Scriptures where God's wrath is impending, He gives a way out: Just previously in **Revelation 14:6-7 (ESV): Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. 7 And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."**

There is a finality to God's wrath, and it will be finished with this final sign of 7 angels and 7 plagues.

Revelation 15:2-4 (ESV): 2 And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. 3 And

they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

**"Great and amazing are your deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!**

**Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!**

**4 Who will not fear, O Lord,
and glorify your name?**

For you alone are holy.

All nations will come

and worship you,

for your righteous acts have been revealed."

John's perspective transitions now to the same sea of glass that we encountered in chapter 4, but now we see a difference with the sea of glass, it is mingled with fire, and it looks as if there are saints of God who are standing there in the midst of this sea and fire. Powerful imagery.

Here are these saints clothed in white linen: These ones are described as being conquerors over the beast and its image and the number of its name, meaning that these people must be the martyred Christians who died for their belief under the empire of the beast, from Revelation 7 and 13.

The wording is important: Their martyrdom was THEIR VICTORY over the beast. In the early Christian church, when someone was martyred for their faith, the church called it their victory day. For they had been faithful even unto death.

These martyrs did not die under the wrath of God, but under the wrath of the beast, and so their blood cries out for retribution.

As this crystal sea reflects upon the very holiness of God, but in this case we also see fire: Now fire in the Scriptures always signifies either judgment or purification, and we can see this connection that here: it speaks of God's divine judgment proceeding from God's very holiness, His holiness and judgment are not disconnected. Here these saints have the best seat in the house to witness the judgment of God upon

These saints stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire, now in the very sanctuary of God, with harps in their hands, awaiting the justice of God through judgment. WHAT A PICTURE!

Our second statement: **God's judgment mixed with His justice**: the song of these saints sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb together: What does that mean? Revelation 15 in its imagery has connection with the book of Exodus, Exodus means deliverance, because its the story of God DELIVERING His people from the clutches of Egypt and bringing them into the Promised Land, where the suffering of nation of Israel under slavery doesn't go unvindicated, but is vindicated in the death of the armies of Pharaoh across the Red Sea.

The same God who delivered Israel from Pharaoh, is the same God who has delivered His church from the beast, and even in deliverance turns to justice. What evil has been done to you will now be judged!

This is why the song proclaims: **Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!**

God's justice is perfect, because His judgments are perfect. When God says His wrath will be completed, that means not one person can say, God OWES ME SOMETHING. God doesn't owe you anything.

This is why their song transitions to a future where all nations will sit in submission to the throne of God:

Revelation 15:4 (ESV): Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name?

For you alone are holy.

All nations will come

and worship you,

for your righteous acts have been revealed."

All nations witness that God's judgments are righteous: After the tribulation, nothing in creation can say God is not worthy to be praised.

Revelation 15:5-8 (ESV): After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, 6 and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests.

7 And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, 8 and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

Again John's perspective shifts and He witnesses something else: More Exodus imagery!

Tent of witness is important: Scriptures tell us that the description for building the tabernacle in Exodus was a copy of what God's sanctuary looked like: tabernacle simply means dwelling place, what John has been witnessing is the TRUE tabernacle of God.

Here the holy of holies opens up and out of it comes the 7 angels with 7 plagues: the symbolism is clear: as horrible as these plagues (much resemble the Egyptian plagues of Exodus) are, they originate in the holiest part of God's righteousness.

Their clothes represent purity in action: white and gold linen.

The four living creatures that we encountered speak again of the intimacy of God's decisions: We remember that God's throne room had concentric circles around His throne of worshipers, and these four living creatures were the closest circle around the throne of the Father.

So even here the holiness of God the Father, He is not touched, He is not approached, but the living creature comes to these angels as the extension of God the Father Himself to execute judgment

The scene is a sobering one and where we come to our last statement:

God's judgment mixed with His authority.

V.8 and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

This scene propels to climactic result God's wrath upon evil. His glory emanates from His power, and no one can enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues are finished with their dispensing.

We see this also in Exodus 40:34-35 (ESV): Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

When's God's shekinah glory enters into the tabernacle, no one can enter it. God's immense power and authority represented in the smoke filling the sanctuary that no one could enter in speaks to a characteristics of God's judgment.

God's judgments are final. The point of no one entering into the sanctuary of God, means everyone is submitted to the fact that what God is going to do is all ready done. No one can come in and intercede on the world's behalf, no one can be like Moses and petition that His mercy comes into play ONE MORE TIME. This judgment is the final nail in the coffin of evil, and no one can convince God otherwise.

Application this morning is this: We know from the scriptures that God's judgment is terrible, its deserved, and its coming soon.

If you are here and you are questioning where you stand with God, I want to tell you my desire is not to scare you into the kingdom of God, it doesn't work that way, but I want to compel you that every moment alive is an opportunity to grasp the grace of God.

There is a season of escape from God's judgment, but only through the work of Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures tell us that through the atonement of Jesus, He has given us a means of escape from the bondage of our sin, and from the judgment of God.